HAL VERB
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9-7-94

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Dear Hal:

I'm writing this letter just one day before I go on a very short vacation for 5 days and I wanted to get the various items (enclosed) to you so you can look them over.

First, I want to thank you for the copy of the letter you sent Doubleday. I suspect that you've probably not heard from them. I did see that Posner's paperback version was at some bookstores I've visited (I glanced through it to see if there were any chapters rewritten or updated and it appeared not. I didn't get a copy of his update but I will in the very near future and, as you suggested, I will go through both the hardback and the paperback to see if there are any changes made and let you know what I find. Perhaps on my vacation I will get a copy & look it over.

Paul Hoch sent me a copy of the La Fontaine's Wash. Post 8/7/94 article on the "Fourth Tramp". I can see why you'd be upset about the article - the La Fontaines place great faith in anything Elrod says & they don't even establish whether Oswald was all alone in a cell or not. The similarity in credibility between

the Roscoe White fiasco & this Elrod story leaps out from the article when I read it. I think it rather odd that the LaFontaines chose the title of their upcoming book as "Oswald Talked". Didn't Oswald "talk" during the 12 hours or so of his interrogation when he had all sorts of police officials, FBI agents, CIA personnel & other agents? And didn't he "talk" when he was surrounded with newsmen (from all over the world, in fact). And didn't he "talk" when he spoke with his brother Robert and also to his mother?

So the LaFontaines find "evidence" he "told all" during a brief period of time - a time when there most probably was very little time for him to tie his shoe laces let alone "bare all" to strangers he is alleged to have somehow met & would never see again! I really can't see how the book version can go any further than the Post article unless they engage in pure speculation (I never counted the "mights" or "could be's" in their article but then we'll have to await their book to see how these "mights" and "could be's" disappear! But don't hold your breath on this one!

Paul also sent me an article written by Alexander Cockburn which appeared in the "New Statesman" of Nov. 19, 1993. Cockburn has now taken the position that Oswald did it all alone & for purely political reasons. When I read Cockburn I think of him as a "left" Ed Butler. There's a line in Cockburn's article where he says the following: "In the brief period between his arrest and his murder by Jack Ruby he had given the clenched fist salute."

When I read that I was actually looking at the record label of "The President's Assassin Speaks" put out by Billy Hargis + crew. That's the one where I discovered the slip Oswald made about being "under the protection of the U.S. government". On the face of the record they show Oswald with that "clenched fist salute"! (Cockburn in a later sentence calls it "the Communist salute" (Did Latter write Cockburn's piece?!!). I'd be willing to bet Cockburn never read your "Oswald in New Orleans" and the proof is contained in this article.

So much for journalistic responsibility! In another part of the article he says of Oswald that "perhaps" he "will be properly recognized as a leftist who came to the conclusion that the only way to relieve the pressure on Cuba and the attempts to murder Castro was by killing Kennedy". Here Cockburn ignores (since he probably never read it, anyway) the Warren Commission's own evidence in which Oswald says there wouldn't be any real change in policies with LBJ succeeding JFK!

Perhaps I ought to "debate" Cockburn on both the "evidence" and the "motivation"!! Maybe we could have an NBC special on the "Battle of the Titans".

I'm glad Paul Hoch sent me the article as I was entirely unaware of it and didn't know what Cockburn actually thought although I had heard rumors about his stance.

I did call Paul and left word to call me but he must be on vacation since he's not returned my call. I see that he is listed as a speaker at the upcoming October "COPA" conference in October so I will see him there.

You asked me about how the tape of your interview went and I thought my last letter mentioned it. In any case, it went very well. I did edit out the earliest few minutes of the interview because I thought the other points covered by you (such as Rosenko, Tague, Failure Analysis, the curbstone & the Green Apple incident were more important). You were right about the tape being dark, though — it definitely was. My co-producer said it was not up to his usual standards. He, in fact, wanted it done over and I said I had to get a program aired so we did the best we could. Walt Brown explained to me that he was not very familiar with the CAMCorder use and his wife who took it was not either. Still, I think this was a very valuable (& historic) tape. Where else was there a TV show devoted solely to refuting Posner? As far as I know my program was & is the only one done.

I recently met with a center/author/researcher who says he had a "crypto-secret clearance" and he knew all about what a super-secret activity was going on at Atsugi known as "METO". He even gave me the actual meaning for that wording which I learned about some 20 years ago. His actual words and mine were close to what I thought the initials stood for. When I return from vacation I'll get an interview of him and see what he can contribute. This person said he was convinced Oswald was with ONI but he gave me no specifics on why he thought so. I'll soon find out.

It is possible that this could be the same person who told Lifton of the "crypto-clearance" — I do not know at this time. One way or the other

I will find out & let you know. I'll get it all down in writing & judge it for reliability & accuracy. These days there are too many people out there making up a lot of stuff that turns out to be virtually useless.

Now about the articles I wrote and submitted to several magazines (on a review of "Case Open" - On one of the articles I was told they were mailing out the issue today so it'll reach subscribers this week. The English magazine told me they would mail out their issue in early August. The mail between here and there is very slow so it'll be here very soon. On the other two magazines ("The Investigator" & "Back Channels") - these are very slow in printing but I submitted the articles in May! My guess is that both will have the articles appear by the end of this month.

Of course, when I get all of these I will definitely send you copies.

By the way, before I forget - yes, I do think it could be a good idea to do another program with you being interviewed. Your suggestion of the program being based on what happened when you came to the Bay Area is good. You also said you'd try to find someone to do the interview (I hope we can find someone with experience in doing TV interviews). Walt did a great job and I can't thank the both of you enough but if we can do a really excellent tape it'd prove to be a dynamite of a show!

Gary Aguilar told me of a phone conversation he recently had with Gus Russo (he worked on the "Frontline" TV show on Oswald). Supposedly Russo was given a $250,000 advance by a publisher on a book he's working on (I presume it's on the Oswald case but I don't know for certain). Gary told me that Russo recently had a luncheon (or dinner) and met with 3 ex-CIA people. These were Richard Helms, William Colby & Theodore Shackley. They (not Russo) pressed him for details on the upcoming "COPA" convention. Apparently they wanted to know whether "COPA" was going to blame the CIA for JFK's murder; was "COPA" still trying to tag David Atlee Phillips with being involved. Russo said the three were determined and actually used the wording to see what they could do "to head them (COPA) off at the pass".

This is all hearsay but Gary kept a tape of what Russo told him.

Now with regard to the enclosures: Probably your main interest would be Aguilar's letter to Posner & Posner's handwritten reply back.

The other enclosures are self-explanatory & are, of course, for your files.

I'll be in touch with you after my brief vacation. Hope you and your wife are fine!

Best,
Hal

ADDENDUM

TO: HAROLD WEISBERG 9-7-94

After I wrote my letter, I forgot to ask you for a little favor.

I would like to obtain from you the transcript of the secret hearing of the Warren Commission members in which they discussed Oswald and the alleged informant (FBI) symbol number. Your book had some but not all of it, I believe.

I'm enclosing a $10.00 check because I know it takes time & effort to locate it & then reproduce it.

I think I've managed to decipher a good part of it & when I do I'll write you and see what you think of my ideas on it.

Thanks again!

Best,
Hal